

§ 1023.320

proceeding, or, with permission of the Board for good cause shown, when the applicant has prevailed in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, but in no case later than 30 days after the Board's final disposition of the proceeding.

(b) For purposes of paragraph (a) of this section, final disposition means the date on which a decision or order disposing of the merits of the proceeding or any other complete resolution of the proceeding, such as a settlement or voluntary dismissal, becomes final and unappealable.

(c) If reconsideration of a decision is sought as to which an applicant believes it has prevailed, proceedings for the award of fees shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy. When the United States appeals the underlying merits of a covered proceeding to a court, no decision on an application for fees and other expenses in connection with that proceeding shall be made until a final and unreviewable decision is rendered by the court on that appeal or until the underlying merits of the case have been finally determined pursuant to the appeal.

PROCEDURES FOR CONSIDERING APPLICATIONS

§ 1023.320 Filing and service of documents.

Any application for an award, or other pleading or document relating to an application, shall be filed and served on all parties to the proceeding in the same manner as other pleadings in the underlying proceeding, except as provided in §1023.311(b) for confidential financial information.

§ 1023.321 Answer to application.

(a) Within 30 days after service of an application, counsel representing the agency against which an award is sought may file an answer to the application. Unless agency counsel requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (b) of this section, failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated as a consent to the award requested.

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(b) If agency counsel and the applicant believe that the issues in the fee application can be settled, they may jointly file a statement of their intent to negotiate a settlement. The filing of this statement shall extend the time for filing an answer for an additional 30 days. Further extensions may be granted by the presiding administrative judge upon request by agency counsel and the applicant.

(c) The answer shall explain in detail any objections to the award requested and identify the facts relied on in support of agency counsel's position. If the answer is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, agency counsel shall include with the answer either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under § 1023.325.

§ 1023.322 Reply.

Within 15 days after service of an answer, the applicant may file a reply. If the reply is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, the applicant shall include with the reply either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under § 1023.325.

§ 1023.323 Comments by other parties.

Any party to a proceeding other than the applicant and agency counsel may file comments on an application within 30 days after it is served or on an answer within 15 days after it is served. A commenting party may not participate further in proceedings on the application unless the Board determines that the public interest requires such participation in order to permit full exploration of matters raised in the comments.

§ 1023.324 Settlement.

The applicant and agency counsel may agree on a proposed settlement of the award before final action on the application, either in connection with a settlement of the underlying proceeding or after the underlying proceeding has been concluded, in accordance with the agency's standard settlement procedure. If a prevailing party and agency counsel agree on a proposed settlement of an award before an application has been filed, the application